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Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women

Report of the Third Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. Hassan Kassem **Najem** (Lebanon)

I. Introduction

1. At its 3rd plenary meeting, on 15 September 1998, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include in the agenda of its fifty-third session the item entitled "Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women" and to allocate it to the Third Committee.

2. The Committee considered the item jointly with item 103, entitled "Advancement of women", at its 12th to 17th meetings, from 14 to 16 and on 19 October 1998, and took action on the item at its 47th and 49th meetings, on 16 and 18 November. An account of the Committee's discussion of the item is contained in the relevant summary records (A/C.3/53/SR.12–17, 47 and 49).

3. For its consideration of the item, the Committee had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women (A/53/308);

(b) Letter dated 23 February 1998 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting the final communiqué of the eighth session of the Islamic Summit Conference, held at Tehran from 9 to 11 December 1997 (A/53/72–S/1998/156);

(c) Letter dated 13 March 1998 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Chile to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly, transmitting the Santiago Consensus, adopted by the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean, held at Santiago from 19 to 21 November 1997 (A/53/87);

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(d) Letter dated 8 April 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting the final communiqué of the twenty-fifth session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, held at Doha, Qatar, from 15 to 17 March 1998 (A/53/95–S/1998/311);

(e) Letter dated 10 November 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (A/53/658–S/1998/1056).

4. At the 12th meeting, on 14 October, introductory statements were made by the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and the Director of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (see A/C.3/53/SR.12).

5. At the same meeting, a statement was made by the Chairperson of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (see A/C.3/53/SR.12).

II. Consideration of proposals

Draft resolution A/C.3/53/L.27

6. At the 47th meeting, on 16 November, the representative of Romania, on behalf of the Chairperson, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action" (A/C.3/53/L.27), which was submitted on the basis of informal consultations.

7. In introducing the draft resolution, the representative of Romania orally corrected it by replacing the words "forty-second session" in operative paragraph 44 by the words "forty-third session".

8. At the 49th meeting, on 18 November, the Secretary of the Committee read out a statement of the programme budget implications of the draft resolution.

9. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.3/53/L.27, as orally corrected, without a vote (see para. 10).

III. Recommendation of the Third Committee

10. The Third Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 50/42 of 8 December 1995, 50/203 of 22 December 1995 and 51/69 of 12 December 1996,

Also recalling its resolutions 52/100 of 12 December 1997 and 52/231 of 4 June 1998, by which it decided to convene a high-level plenary review as a special session of the General Assembly to appraise and assess the progress achieved in the implementation of

the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women[1] and the Beijing Declaration[2] and Platform for Action[3] five years after their adoption, and to consider further actions and initiatives,

Taking note of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/6 of 22 July 1996 on the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women, Council agreed conclusions 1997/2 of 18 July 1997[4] and resolutions 1998/43 of 31 July 1998 on mainstreaming the gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system and 1998/26 of 28 July 1998 on the implementation of the Platform for Action and the role of operational activities in promoting, in particular, capacity-building and resource mobilization for enhancing the participation of women in development,

Reaffirming that the full implementation of the Platform for Action requires immediate and concerted action by all to create a peaceful, just and humane world based on all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the principle of equality for all people of all ages and from all walks of life and, to that end, recognizing that broad-based and sustained economic growth in the context of sustainable development is necessary to sustain social development and social justice,

Deeply convinced that the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women are important contributions to the advancement of women worldwide in the achievement of gender equality and must be translated into effective action by all States, the United Nations system and other organizations concerned, as well as by non-governmental organizations,

Recognizing that the implementation of the Platform for Action rests primarily at the national level, that Governments, non-governmental organizations and public and private institutions should be involved in the implementation process and that national mechanisms also have an essential role in this regard, and bearing in mind that enhanced national efforts and international cooperation are essential for the effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action,

Reaffirming its decision that the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on the Status of Women, in accordance with their respective mandates and with Assembly resolution 48/162 of 20 December 1993 and other relevant resolutions, constitute a three-tiered intergovernmental mechanism that plays the primary role in the overall policy-making and follow-up and in coordinating the implementation and monitoring of the Platform for Action, and reaffirming the need for a coordinated follow-up to and implementation of the results of major international conferences in the economic, social and related fields,

Reaffirming that the Commission on the Status of Women has a central role as a functional commission assisting the Economic and Social Council in the monitoring, within the United Nations system, of the implementation of the Platform for Action and in advising the Council thereon, and serves as the preparatory body for the special session of the General Assembly, open to the participation of all States Members of the United Nations, members

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[1] *Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Nairobi, 15–26 July 1985* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.85.IV.10), chap. I, sect. A.

[2] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4–15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), resolution 1, annex I.

[3] Ibid., annex II.

[4] A/52/3, chap. IV, para. 5.

of the specialized agencies and observers, in accordance with the established practice of the General Assembly,

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women;[5]

2. *Welcomes* the initiatives and actions taken by Governments, the United Nations system and other international organizations, including their secretariats, as well as by non-governmental organizations and other actors of civil society, towards the implementation of the Beijing Declaration[1] and Platform for Action[2] adopted by the Conference, and calls upon them to implement effectively all the critical areas of concern of the Platform for Action;

3. *Calls once again upon* States, the United Nations system and all other actors to implement the Platform for Action, in particular by promoting an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective at all levels, including in the design, monitoring and evaluation of all policies and programmes to ensure effective implementation of all critical areas of concern in the Platform for Action;

4. *Stresses* that Governments have the primary responsibility for implementing the Platform for Action, and reaffirms that Governments should continue to commit themselves at the highest political level to its implementation and should take a leading role in coordinating, monitoring and assessing progress in the advancement of women;

5. *Welcomes* the progress achieved and calls for further intensified efforts at the international level to integrate the equal status and all human rights of women into the mainstream of United Nations system-wide activity, and to address those issues regularly and systematically throughout relevant United Nations bodies and mechanisms, and welcomes, in this context, Economic and Social Council agreed conclusions 1998/2 of 28 July 1998 on the follow-up to and implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action;[6]

6. *Welcomes* the steps already taken by the Secretary-General to draw the attention of all senior managers in the United Nations system to Economic and Social Council agreed conclusions 1997/2 and resolution 1998/43 on mainstreaming the gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system, and urges the Secretary-General to intensify his efforts to ensure that managers are held accountable for gender mainstreaming in their areas of responsibility and that gender mainstreaming is systematically integrated into the reform process of the United Nations, including the work of the executive committees;

7. *Directs* all its committees and bodies and draws the attention of other bodies of the United Nations system to the need to mainstream a gender perspective systematically into all areas of their work, in particular in such areas as macroeconomic questions, operational activities for development, poverty eradication, human rights, humanitarian assistance, budgeting, disarmament, peace and security, and legal and political matters;

8. *Requests* all bodies that deal with programme and budgetary matters, including the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the governing bodies of the United Nations funds and programmes, to ensure that all programmes, medium-term plans and, in particular, programme budgets visibly mainstream a gender perspective;

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[5] A/53/308.

[6] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/53/3), chap. VI, para. 3.

9. *Reiterates* the request of the Economic and Social Council to the Secretariat to present issues and approaches in a gender-sensitive manner when preparing reports, so as to provide the intergovernmental machinery with an analytical basis for gender-responsive policy formulation;

10. *Requests* the Economic and Social Council to ensure that gender mainstreaming is an integral part of all its activities concerning integrated follow-up to recent United Nations conferences, building upon its agreed conclusions 1997/2 and resolution 1998/43;

11. *Re-emphasizes* the need for the United Nations system to strengthen the role of gender units and gender focal points;

12. *Urges* Governments that have not yet done so to establish or strengthen appropriate national machineries for the advancement of women at the highest political level, including by making appropriate budgetary allocations to ensure their effective operation, appropriate intra- and inter-ministerial procedures and staffing, and other institutions with the mandate and capacity to promote women's participation and integrate gender analysis into policies and programmes;

13. *Notes with appreciation* that many Governments have developed national strategies and action plans, some of them in consultation with non-governmental organizations, and urges all Governments that have not yet done so to complete their national action plans as soon as possible but no later than June 1999 and to submit these plans to the Secretariat;

14. *Encourages* Governments to submit responses to the questionnaire prepared by the Secretariat in consultation with the regional commissions, which, together with the national action plans, are an essential contribution to the special session of the General Assembly;

15. *Reiterates* its invitation to Governments to prepare national evaluations of the implementation of the Platform for Action with the involvement of civil society;

16. *Recognizes* the importance attached to the regional and subregional monitoring of the global and regional platforms for action by regional commissions and other subregional or regional structures, within their mandates, in consultation with Governments, and calls for the promotion of cooperation in that respect among Governments and, where appropriate, national machineries of the same region;

17. *Calls upon* States to take action to fulfil the commitments for the advancement of women and for strengthening international cooperation made at the Fourth World Conference on Women, and reaffirms that adequate financial resources should be committed at the international level for the implementation of the Platform for Action in developing countries, in particular those in Africa and the least developed countries;

18. *Invites* the Secretary-General, in the implementation of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa, to pay special attention to the needs and role of women as actors and beneficiaries in the development process;

19. *Reaffirms* that, in order to implement the Platform for Action, adequate mobilization of resources at the national and international levels, as well as new and additional resources for the developing countries, in particular those in Africa and the least developed countries, from all available funding mechanisms, including multilateral, bilateral and private sources for the advancement of women, will also be required;

20. *Recognizes* that implementation of the Platform for Action in the countries with economies in transition requires continued national efforts and international cooperation and assistance, as indicated in the Platform for Action;

21. *Reaffirms* that in order to implement the Platform for Action a reformulation of policies and reallocation of resources may be needed, but that some policy changes may not necessarily have financial implications;

22. *Calls upon* Member States to allocate sufficient resources for the provision of data disaggregated by sex and age for undertaking gender impact analyses in order to develop successful national implementation strategies for the Platform for Action;

23. *Stresses* that full and effective implementation of the Platform for Action will require a political commitment to making available human and financial resources for the empowerment of women, the integration of a gender perspective in budgetary decisions on policies and programmes and adequate financing of specific programmes for securing equality between women and men;

24. *Invites* Member States to encourage non-governmental organizations, the private sector and other institutions to mobilize additional resources to facilitate the full implementation of the Platform for Action in order to achieve gender equality;

25. *Recognizes* that the creation of an enabling environment at the national and international levels is necessary to ensure the full participation of women in economic activities, and calls upon States to remove obstacles to the full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action;

26. *Calls again upon* Member States to commit themselves to achieving gender balance by, *inter alia,* aiming at gender balance in the composition of delegations to the United Nations and other international forums, and by presenting, promoting and appointing women candidates in all government-appointed committees, boards and other relevant official bodies, as well as in all international bodies, institutions and organizations;

27. *Reiterates* its request to the Secretary-General to ensure that the Division for the Advancement of Women can carry out effectively all the tasks foreseen for it in the Platform for Action, play a catalytic role in support of gender mainstreaming, including through policy advisory services at the request of Governments, in cooperation with other bodies of the United Nations system, and serve as the secretariat for the special session of the General Assembly by, *inter alia,* providing sufficient human and financial resources within the regular budget of the United Nations;

28. *Notes with appreciation* the work done by the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, *inter alia,* in her role as the Chairperson of the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality, towards the system-wide implementation of the Platform for Action and gender mainstreaming and towards the achievement of gender balance in the Secretariat and system-wide and, in that regard, stresses the importance of increasing human and financial resources from all available funding sources;

29. *Takes note* of the statement on gender equality and mainstreaming in the work of the United Nations system, adopted by the Administrative Committee on Coordination in March 1998, in which gender equality was established as a strategic objective of the international community and of the organizations of the United Nations system;

30. *Encourages* the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality to continue its cooperation with the subsidiary bodies of the Administrative Committee on Coordination to develop strategies, tools and methodologies, such as gender-sensitive

budgeting, to enhance the implementation and monitoring of the Platform for Action and gender mainstreaming in the United Nations system;

31. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in keeping with Economic and Social Council resolution 1998/26, to ensure that a gender perspective is integral to all operational activities, is fully integrated into the triennial comprehensive policy review of those activities and that resident coordinators, in the execution of their mandates, fully incorporate a gender perspective, in particular into the coordinated follow-up to recent global United Nations conferences, fully utilizing all the expertise available in the United Nations system;

32. *Invites* States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women to include information in their reports on measures taken to implement the Platform for Action;

33. *Notes* the importance of the activities undertaken by the United Nations Development Fund for Women and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women in the implementation of the Platform for Action, and encourages the strengthening of their cooperation and coordination within their respective mandates;

34. *Encourages* international financial institutions to continue to review and revise policies, procedures and staffing to ensure that investments and programmes benefit women, and invites the Secretary-General to include information on any such steps in his annual report on follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women, to be submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session;

35. *Invites* the World Trade Organization to contribute to the implementation of the Platform for Action, including through activities in cooperation with the United Nations system;

36. *Reiterates* that the special session of the General Assembly, which will take place from 5 to 9 June 2000, should review and appraise progress in implementation, focusing on examples of good practices, positive actions, lessons learned, obstacles and key challenges remaining, and identify further actions and initiatives for achieving gender equality in the next millennium;

37. *Decides* that the special session of the General Assembly shall be entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century";

38. *Encourages* appropriate regional preparatory activities for the special session, *inter alia,* by Governments in cooperation with the regional commissions, and recommends submission of the results as an input to the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-fourth session, in 2000;

39. *Invites* the Commission on the Status of Women acting as the preparatory committee for the special session to propose the agenda (structure and themes) and documentation for the special session, taking into account General Assembly resolution 52/231, and, at its forty-third session, to focus in particular on the report requested on suggestions on further actions and initiatives that might be considered during the review in order to achieve gender equality, with attention to mainstreaming a gender perspective and to common trends and themes across the twelve critical areas of concern;

40. *Reiterates* its request to the Secretary-General to submit to the Commission at its forty-third session a report on suggestions for further actions and initiatives;

41. *Requests* the Secretary-General to provide by the end of 1999 a compilation of updated statistics and indicators on the situation of women and girls, including older women

and those with special needs, in countries around the world, including by issuing a volume of *The World's Women*;

42. *Reiterates* that participation in the special session should be at a high political level;

43. *Emphasizes* the important role of non-governmental organizations in implementing the Platform for Action and the need for their active involvement in the preparations for the special session, as well as the need to ensure appropriate arrangements for their contributions to the special session;

44. *Recalls* the interim measures put forward by the Economic and Social Council in its decision 1997/298 of 23 July 1997 for the participation of non-governmental organizations in the work of the Commission on the Status of Women with a view to their application for the forty-third session and recommends that the Council extend their application to the forty-third session of the Commission;

45. *Invites* the Commission on the Status of Women, meeting as the preparatory committee in March 1999, to recommend to the General Assembly appropriate arrangements for the involvement and participation of non-governmental organizations in the special session;

46. *Decides* that, in the absence of a recommendation from the Commission on the Status of Women at its first meeting as the preparatory committee, in 1998, the non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, as well as the non-governmental organizations that participated in the Fourth World Conference on Women whose applications for consultative status with the Council are still under consideration, may participate in the sessions of the Commission meeting as the preparatory committee, in 1999 and 2000;

47. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report annually to the General Assembly, the Commission on the Status of Women and the Economic and Social Council, on follow-up to and progress in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action;

48. *Decides* to appraise the progress on this question on an annual basis and to retain on the agenda of its forthcoming sessions the item entitled "Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women".

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Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees: questions relating to refugees, returnees and displaced persons and humanitarian questions

Report of the Third Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. Hassan Kassem **Najem** (Lebanon)

I. Introduction

1. At its 3rd plenary meeting, on 15 September 1998, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include in the agenda of its fifty-third session the item entitled "Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees: questions relating to refugees, returnees and displaced persons and humanitarian questions" and to allocate it to the Third Committee.

2. The Committee considered the item at its 42nd to 50th meetings, on 11 to 13 and 16 to 19 November 1998. An account of the Committee's discussion is contained in the relevant summary records (A/C.3/53/SR.42–50).

3. For its consideration of the item, the Committee had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees;[1]

(b) Report of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on the work of its forty-ninth session;[2]

(c) Report of the Secretary-General on assistance to unaccompanied refugee minors (A/53/325);

(d) Report of the Secretary-General on assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa (A/53/328);

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 12* (A/53/12).
[2] Ibid., *Supplement No. 12A* (A/53/12/Add.1).

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(e) Report of the Secretary-General on the follow-up to the Regional Conference to Address the Problems of Refugees, Displaced Persons, Other Forms of Involuntary Displacement and Returnees in the Countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States and Relevant Neighbouring States (A/53/413);

(f) Report of the Secretary-General on a new international humanitarian order (A/53/486);

(g) Letter dated 14 July 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Namibia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting the resolutions adopted at the ninety-ninth session of the General Conference of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, held at Windhoek from 2 to 11 April 1998 (A/53/201);

(h) Letter dated 12 October 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Eritrea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (A/53/494–S/1998/949);

(i) Letter dated 20 October 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Ethiopia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (A/53/528–S/1998/981);

(j) Letter dated 17 November 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (A/C.3/53/16).

4. At the 42nd meeting, on 11 November, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees made an introductory statement (see A/C.3/53/SR.42).

II. Consideration of proposals

A. Draft resolution A/C.3/53/L.30

5. At the 46th meeting, on 13 November, the representative of *Mozambique* introduced a draft resolution entitled "Enlargement of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees" (A/C.3/53/L.30).

6. At the 47th meeting, on 16 November, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.3/53/L.30 without a vote (see para. 22, draft resolution I).

B. Draft resolution A/C.3/53/L.31

7. At the 46th meeting, on 13 November, the representative of the Sudan, on behalf of *Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Botswana, Chad, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire*, the *Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau*, the *Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Kenya, Madagascar, Morocco*, the *Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Qatar*, the *Sudan*, the *Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey* and *Yemen*, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Assistance to unaccompanied refugee minors" (A/C.3/53/L.31). Subsequently, *Cameroon, Guinea, Liberia, Malawi, Sierra Leone* and the *United Republic of Tanzania* joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

8. At the 47th meeting, on 16 November, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.3/53/L.31 without a vote (see para. 22, draft resolution II).

C. Draft resolution A/C.3/53/L.52

9. At the 48th meeting, on 17 November, the representative of the Russian Federation, on behalf of *Armenia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, Luxembourg*, the *Netherlands, Norway, Portugal*, the *Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan*, the *United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland* and the *United States of America* introduced a draft resolution entitled "Follow-up to the Regional Conference to Address the Problems of Refugees, Displaced Persons, Other Forms of Involuntary Displacement and Returnees in the Countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States and Relevant Neighbouring States" (A/C.3/53/L.52). Subsequently, *Iceland, Israel* and *the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

10. At the 49th meeting, on 18 November, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.3/53/L.52 without a vote (see para. 22, draft resolution III).

11. After adoption of the draft resolution, a statement was made by the representative of Ukraine (see A/C.3/53/SR.49).

D. Draft resolution A/C.3/53/L.54

12. At the 48th meeting, on 17 November, the representative of Jordan, on behalf of *Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cameroon*, the *Central African Republic, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Mauritania, Monaco, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Panama*, the *Philippines, Qatar, Slovenia*, the *Sudan, Turkmenistan*, the *United Arab Emirates* and *Yemen*, introduced a draft resolution entitled "New international humanitarian order" (A/C.3/53/L.54). Subsequently, *Israel* and *Malaysia* joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

13. At the 49th meeting, on 18 November, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.3/53/L.54 without a vote (see para. 22, draft resolution IV).

14. Before the adoption of the draft resolution, a statement was made by the representative of Austria (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Union) (see A/C.3/53/SR.49).

E. Draft resolution A/C.3/53/L.55

15. At the 48th meeting, on 17 November, the representative of Sweden, on behalf of *Afghanistan, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan*, the *Bahamas, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bolivia, Botswana, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde*, the *Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia*, the *Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus*, the *Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominica*, the *Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France*, the *Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Latvia, Lesotho, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Mali, Malta*, the *Marshall Islands, Monaco, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia*, the *Netherlands, New Zealand,*

the *Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru*, the *Philippines, Poland, Portugal*, the *Republic of Korea, Romania*, the *Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, Ukraine*, the *United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland*, the *United States of America, Uruguay, Zambia* and *Zimbabwe*, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Office of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees" (A/C.3/53/L.55). Subsequently, *Eritrea, Kyrgyzstan*, the *Federated States of Micronesia*, the *Sudan* and *Togo* joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

16. In introducing the draft resolution, the representative of Sweden orally revised the first part of operative paragraph 10, which had read:

> "10. *Calls upon* States and all concerned parties to refrain from any actions that prevent or obstruct the staff of the Office of the High Commissioner and other humanitarian personnel from performing the functions required under their mandates"

to read:

> "10. *Calls upon* States and all concerned parties to continue to closely cooperate with the staff of the Office of the High Commissioner and other humanitarian personnel in performing the functions required under their mandates".

17. At the 49th meeting, on 18 November, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.3/53/L.55, as orally revised, without a vote (see para. 22, draft resolution V).

18. After the adoption of the draft resolution, a statement was made by the representative of Singapore (see A/C.3/53/SR.49).

F. Draft resolution A/C.3/53/L.53

19. At the 49th meeting, on 18 November, the representative of the *United Republic of Tanzania*, on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of African States and *Yemen*, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa" (A/C.3/53/L.53).

20. At the 50th meeting, on 19 November, the representative the United Republic of Tanzania orally revised the draft resolution as follows:

(a) In the third preambular paragraph, the words "*Recognizing* the need to take steps to improve the security of refugees" were revised to read "*Recognizing* the need to improve the security of refugees";

(b) Operative paragraph 3, which had read:

> "3. *Urges* States and the international community to ensure that the civilian and humanitarian nature of refugee camps is not compromised by the presence of armed elements"

was revised to read:

> "3. *Calls upon* all States and international organizations, within their mandates, to ensure that the civilian and humanitarian nature of refugee camps is not compromised by the presence or activities of armed elements";

(c) Operative paragraph 15, which had read:

"15. *Calls upon* the Office of the High Commissioner to continue to work closely with the Organization for African Unity and Member States at identifying solutions to all outstanding refugee problems"

was revised to read:

"15. *Calls upon* the Office of the High Commissioner, the Organization for African Unity, subregional organizations and all African States to continue to work closely in identifying solutions to all outstanding refugee problems";

(d) Operative paragraph 22, which had read:

"22. *Calls upon* the international donor community to provide increased material and financial assistance to the countries of asylum for the implementation of programmes intended for the rehabilitation of the environment, infrastructure and other sectors, including the social, economic and cultural sectors, affected by refugees in countries of asylum"

was revised to read:

"22. *Calls upon* the international donor community to provide material and financial assistance for the implementation of programmes intended for the rehabilitation of the environment and infrastructure affected by refugees in countries of asylum";

(e) In operative paragraph 23, the words "the special needs of refugee women and children, including those with special protection needs, as well as displaced persons" were revised to read "the special needs of refugee women and children and displaced persons, including those with special protection needs".

21. At its 50th meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.3/53/L.53, as orally revised, without a vote (see para. 22, draft resolution VI).

III. Recommendations of the Third Committee

22. The Third Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolutions:

Draft resolution I

Enlargement of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

The General Assembly,

Taking note of Economic and Social Council decision 1998/211 of 7 May 1998 concerning the enlargement of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees,

Taking note also of the request regarding the enlargement of the Executive Committee, contained in the note verbale dated 14 October 1997 from the Permanent Mission of Mozambique to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General,[3]

[3] E/1998/3.

Welcoming the accession of the Republic of Mozambique to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees[4] and its 1967 Protocol and its ratification of the Organization of African Unity Convention governing the specific aspects of refugee problems in Africa of 1969,[5]

1. *Decides* to increase the number of members of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees from fifty-three to fifty-four States;

2. *Requests* the Economic and Social Council to elect the additional member at its organizational session for 1999.

Draft resolution II

Assistance to unaccompanied refugee minors

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 49/172 of 23 December 1994, 50/150 of 21 December 1995, 51/73 of 12 December 1996 and 52/105 of 12 December 1997,

Aware of the fact that the majority of refugees are children and women,

Bearing in mind that unaccompanied refugee minors are among the most vulnerable refugees and the most at risk of neglect, violence, forced military recruitment, sexual assault and other abuses and therefore require special assistance and care,

Mindful of the fact that the ultimate solution to the plight of unaccompanied minors is their return to and reunification with their families,

Noting the revised Guidelines on Refugee Children issued by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in May 1994 and the development of an emergency kit to facilitate coordination and to enhance the quality of responses to the needs of unaccompanied minors by the Office of the High Commissioner, the United Nations Children's Fund and non-governmental organizations,

Noting with appreciation the efforts of the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations Children's Fund in the identification and tracing of unaccompanied refugee minors, and welcoming their efforts in reunifying family members of refugees,

Welcoming the efforts exerted by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for the reunification of family members of refugees,

Noting the efforts of the High Commissioner to ensure the protection of and assistance to refugees, including children and unaccompanied minors, and that further efforts need to be exerted to this effect,

Recalling the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child[6] and the 1951 Convention[7] and the 1967 Protocol[8] relating to the Status of Refugees,

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[4] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 189, No. 2545.

[5] Ibid., vol. 1520, No. 26363.

[6] Resolution 44/25, annex.

[7] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 189, No. 2545.

[8] Ibid., vol. 606, No. 8791.

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General;[9]

2. *Also takes note* of the report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict;[10]

3. *Expresses its deep concern* at the continued plight of unaccompanied refugee minors, and emphasizes once again the urgent need for their early identification and for timely, detailed and accurate information on their number and whereabouts;

4. *Expresses the hope once again* that adequate resources will be provided for programmes of identification and tracing of unaccompanied refugee minors;

5. *Calls upon* the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, in cooperation with other relevant United Nations bodies, to incorporate into its programmes policies that aim at preventing refugee family separation, conscious of the importance of family unity;

6. *Calls upon* all Governments, the Secretary-General, the Office of the High Commissioner, all United Nations organizations, other international organizations and non-governmental organizations concerned to exert the maximum effort to assist and protect refugee minors and to expedite the return to and reunification with their families of unaccompanied refugee minors;

7. *Urges* the Office of the High Commissioner, all United Nations organizations, other international organizations and non-governmental organizations concerned to take appropriate steps to mobilize resources commensurate with the needs and interests of unaccompanied refugee minors and for their reunification with their families;

8. *Calls upon* all States and other parties to armed conflict to respect international humanitarian law and, in this regard, calls upon States parties to respect fully the provisions of the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949[11] and related instruments, while bearing in mind resolution 2 adopted at the twenty-sixth International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, held at Geneva in December 1995, and to respect the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child,[6] which accord children affected by armed conflict special protection and treatment;

9. *Condemns* all acts of exploitation of unaccompanied refugee minors, including their use as soldiers or human shields in armed conflict and their forced recruitment into military forces, and any other acts that endanger their safety and personal security;

10. *Calls upon* the Secretary-General, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat, the United Nations Children's Fund, other United Nations organizations and other international organizations to mobilize adequate assistance to unaccompanied refugee minors in the areas of relief, education, health and psychological rehabilitation;

11. *Encourages* the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict in his efforts to raise awareness worldwide and to mobilize official and public opinion for the protection of children affected by armed conflict, including refugee minors;

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[9] A/53/325.

[10] A/53/482, annex.

[11] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, Nos. 970–973.

12. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session on the implementation of the present resolution and to give special attention to the girl-child refugee in his report.

Draft resolution III

Follow-up to the Regional Conference to Address the Problems of Refugees, Displaced Persons, Other Forms of Involuntary Displacement and Returnees in the Countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States and Relevant Neighbouring States

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 48/113 of 20 December 1993, 49/173 of 23 December 1994, 50/151 of 21 December 1995, 51/70 of 12 December 1996 and, in particular, 52/102 of 12 December 1997,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General[12] and that of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees,[13]

Recognizing the ongoing acuteness of the migration and displacement problems in the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States and the necessity to follow up the Regional Conference to Address the Problems of Refugees, Displaced Persons, Other Forms of Involuntary Displacement and Returnees in the Countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States and Relevant Neighbouring States and the succeeding conclusions of the Executive Committee of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees,[14]

Reaffirming the view of the Conference that the primary responsibility for tackling population displacement problems lies with the affected countries themselves and that these issues are to be regarded as national priorities, while at the same time recognizing the need for enhancing international support for the national efforts of the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States aiming at the effective implementation of such responsibilities within the framework of the Programme of Action of the Conference,

Noting with satisfaction the efforts of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Organization for Migration and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe towards developing strategies and practical tools for more effective capacity-building in countries of origin and enhancing programmes to address the needs of various categories of concern to the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States,

Welcoming the contributions of those countries that responded to the 1998 appeal launched by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration, and appreciating this tangible encouragement to the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States and to further inter-agency cooperation,

Taking note of the positive results emanating from the implementation of the Programme of Action of the Conference,

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[12] A/53/413.

[13] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 12* (A/53/12).

[14] Ibid., *Supplement No. 12A* (A/53/12/Add.1).

Convinced of the necessity for further strengthening practical measures for the achievement of effective implementation of the Programme of Action,

Recalling that the protection and promotion of human rights and the strengthening of democratic institutions are essential to prevent mass population displacement,

Mindful that effective implementation of the recommendations contained in the Programme of Action should be facilitated and can be ensured only through cooperation and coordinated activities undertaken in this respect by all interested States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and other actors,

Noting and reaffirming the importance of the 1951 Convention[15] and the 1967 Protocol[16] relating to the Status of Refugees,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General[12] and the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees;[13]

2. *Calls upon* Governments of the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States, in cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Organization for Migration and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to strengthen their efforts and mutual cooperation relating to the follow-up to the Regional Conference to Address the Problems of Refugees, Displaced Persons, Other Forms of Involuntary Displacement and Returnees in the Countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States and Relevant Neighbouring States, and welcomes the positive results achieved by them in the implementation of the Programme of Action of the Conference;

3. *Invites* all countries that have not yet done so to accede to and implement fully the 1951 Convention[15] and the 1967 Protocol[16] relating to the Status of Refugees, while welcoming the accession of Turkmenistan to the Convention;

4. *Calls upon* States and interested international organizations, in a spirit of solidarity and burden-sharing, to provide appropriate forms and levels of support for the practical implementation of the Programme of Action;

5. *Invites* international financial and other institutions to contribute to the financing of projects and programmes within the framework of the implementation of the Programme of Action;

6. *Invites* the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States to intensify bilateral and subregional cooperation in maintaining the balance of commitments and interests in the process leading up to the implementation of the Programme of Action;

7. *Calls upon* the Governments of the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States to continue to strengthen their commitment to the principles underpinning the Programme of Action, in particular human rights and refugee protection principles, and to lend high-level political support to ensure progress in its implementation;

8. *Invites* the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration to enhance their mutual relationship with other key international actors, such as the Council of Europe, the European Commission and human rights, development and financial institutions, in order to better address the wide-ranging and complex issues in the Programme of Action;

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[15] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 189, No. 2545.

[16] Ibid., vol. 606, No. 8791.

9. *Welcomes* the progress made in building civil society, in particular through the development of the non-governmental sector and the development of cooperation between non-governmental organizations and the Governments of a number of countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States, and notes in this regard the relationship between the progress made in implementing the Programme of Action and the success in promoting civil society, especially in the field of human rights;

10. *Encourages* the involvement of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations in the follow-up to the Conference, and invites them to demonstrate stronger support for the process of the multinational constructive dialogue among a wide range of countries concerned and further action with a view to the full implementation of the recommendations of the Conference;

11. *Emphasizes* the necessity of fulfilling the recommendations of the Programme of Action relating to ensuring respect for human rights as an important factor in the management of migration flows, the consolidation of democracy, the rule of law and stability;

12. *Recognizes* the importance of undertaking measures, on the basis of strict adherence to all of the principles of international law, including humanitarian law and international human rights standards, to prevent situations that lead to new flows of refugees, displaced persons and other forms of involuntary displacement;

13. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session on the progress achieved in the implementation of the Programme of Action;

14. *Decides* to continue examination of the question at its fifty-fourth session under the appropriate agenda item.

Draft resolution IV

New international humanitarian order

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 51/74 of 12 December 1996 and other pertinent resolutions[17] relating to the promotion of the new international humanitarian order and of international cooperation in the humanitarian field,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General[18] and the previous reports[19] containing the comments and views of Governments as well as intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations,

Keeping in mind the importance, in this context, of the role of the United Nations system, including, in particular, the newly established Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs,

[17] Resolutions 36/136 of 14 December 1981, 37/201 of 18 December 1982, 38/125 of 16 December 1983, 40/126 of 13 December 1985, 42/120 and 42/121 of 7 December 1987, 43/129 and 43/130 of 8 December 1988, 45/101 and 45/102 of 14 December 1990, 47/106 of 16 December 1992 and 49/170 of 23 December 1994.

[18] A/53/486.

[19] A/37/145, A/38/450, A/40/358 and Add.1 and 2, A/41/472, A/43/734 and Add.1, A/45/524, A/47/352, A/49/577 and Corr.1 and A/51/454.

Noting with concern the growing number of complex emergencies and humanitarian problems,

Noting the importance of adherence to internationally accepted norms and principles and the need to promote, as required, national and international legislation to meet actual and potential humanitarian challenges,

Bearing in mind that an adequate response to emergency situations can be best ensured through local capacity-building and institution-building,

1. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Secretary-General for his continuing support for the efforts to promote a new international humanitarian order;

2. *Invites* Governments to make available to the Secretary-General, on a voluntary basis, information and expertise on humanitarian problems of special concern to them, in order to identify opportunities for future action;

3. *Calls upon* Governments and other actors to ensure strict adherence to accepted humanitarian norms and principles and to promote national and international legislation that is responsive to actual and potential humanitarian problems;

4. *Invites* the Independent Bureau for Humanitarian Issues to reinforce its activities as described in the report of the Secretary-General[18] and other pertinent documents;

5. *Requests* the Secretary-General to remain in contact with Governments and non-governmental organizations concerned, including the Independent Bureau for Humanitarian Issues, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session.

Draft resolution V

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on the activities of her Office[20] and the report and conclusions of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on the work of its forty-ninth session,[21]

Recalling its resolution 52/103 of 12 December 1997,

Commending the High Commissioner and her staff for the competent, courageous and dedicated manner in which they discharge their responsibilities, paying tribute to those staff members whose lives have been endangered in the course of their duties, and deploring the injuries and deaths of staff members as a consequence of generalized as well as targeted violence,

1. *Endorses* the report and conclusions of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on the work of its forty-ninth session;[21]

2. *Strongly reaffirms* the fundamental importance and the purely humanitarian and non-political character of the function of the Office of the United Nations High

[20] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 12* (A/53/12).

[21] Ibid., *Supplement No. 12A* (A/53/12/Add.1).

Commissioner for Refugees of providing international protection to refugees and seeking permanent solutions to the problem of refugees;

3. *Reaffirms* the fundamental importance of the 1951 Convention[22] and the 1967 Protocol[23] relating to the Status of Refugees, in particular their implementation in a manner fully compatible with the object and purpose of those instruments, notes with satisfaction that one hundred and thirty-six States are now parties to one or both instruments, and welcomes in this regard the decision by the High Commissioner to actively promote accessions to the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol;

4. *Notes* that the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights[24] is being commemorated in 1998, and calls upon all States to reaffirm their commitment to the Declaration as a fundamental step towards protection for everyone;

5. *Reaffirms* that, as set out in article 14 of the Declaration, everyone has the right to seek and enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution, and calls upon all States to refrain from taking measures that jeopardize the institution of asylum, in particular by returning or expelling refugees or asylum-seekers contrary to international standards;

6. *Emphasizes* that refugee protection is primarily the responsibility of States, whose full and effective cooperation, action and political resolve are required to enable the Office of the High Commissioner to fulfil its mandated functions;

7. *Stresses* the importance of international solidarity and burden-sharing in reinforcing the international protection of refugees, and urges all States and relevant non-governmental and other organizations, in conjunction with the Office of the High Commissioner, to cooperate and mobilize resources until durable solutions are found with a view to reducing the burden borne by States, particularly developing countries, that have received large numbers of asylum-seekers and refugees;

8. *Condemns* all acts that pose a threat to the personal security and well-being of refugees and asylum-seekers such as refoulement, unlawful expulsion and physical attacks, and calls upon all States of refuge, in cooperation with international organizations where appropriate, to take all necessary measures to ensure respect for the principles of refugee protection, including the humane treatment of asylum-seekers;

9. *Urges* States to uphold the civilian and humanitarian character of refugee camps and settlements, *inter alia*, through effective measures to prevent the infiltration of armed elements, to identify and separate any such armed elements from refugee populations, to settle refugees in secure locations and to afford to the Office of the High Commissioner and other appropriate humanitarian organizations prompt, unhindered and safe access to asylum-seekers, refugees and other persons of concern;

10. *Calls upon* States and all concerned parties to continue to closely cooperate with the staff of the Office of the High Commissioner and other humanitarian personnel in performing the functions required under their mandates, to take all possible measures to safeguard their physical security and property, to investigate fully any crime committed against them, to bring to justice persons responsible for such crimes and to facilitate the discharge of the mandated functions of the Office of the High Commissioner as well as of other humanitarian organizations;

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[22] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 189, No. 2545.

[23] Ibid., vol. 606, No. 8791.

[24] Resolution 217 A (III).

11. *Urges* all States and relevant organizations to support the High Commissioner's search for durable solutions to refugee problems, including voluntary repatriation, integration in the country of asylum and resettlement in a third country, as appropriate, reaffirms that voluntary repatriation is the preferred solution to refugee problems, and calls upon countries of origin, countries of asylum, the Office of the High Commissioner and the international community as a whole to do everything possible to enable refugees to exercise their right to return home in safety and with dignity;

12. *Calls upon* all States to promote conditions conducive to the voluntary repatriation of refugees in safety and with dignity, including conditions furthering reconciliation and long-term development in countries of return, and to support the sustainable reintegration of returnees by providing countries of origin with necessary rehabilitation and development assistance in conjunction, as appropriate, with the Office of the High Commissioner and relevant development agencies, and also urges the Office of the High Commissioner to strengthen its cooperation and coordination with relevant entities, including international financial institutions and non-governmental organizations;

13. *Reiterates* the right of all persons to return to their country of origin, emphasizes in this regard the obligation of all States to accept the return of their nationals, calls upon all States to facilitate the return of their nationals who have sought asylum and have been determined not to be in need of international protection, and affirms the need for the return of persons, irrespective of the status of the persons concerned, to be undertaken in a humane manner and in full respect for their human rights and dignity;

14. *Acknowledges* the desirability of comprehensive approaches by the international community, including comprehensive regional approaches, to the problems of refugees and displaced persons, and notes in this regard that capacity-building in countries of origin and countries of asylum can play an important role in addressing the root causes of refugee flows, in strengthening emergency preparedness and response, and in providing effective protection and achieving durable solutions;

15. *Urges* States, in cooperation with the Office of the High Commissioner and other relevant organizations, to explore and fully support capacity-building initiatives as part of a comprehensive approach to addressing refugee issues, and to take necessary measures to promote sustainable development and to ensure the success of capacity-building activities, including those which strengthen legal and judicial institutions, strengthen civil society and promote the observance of human rights, the rule of law and accountability, which enhance the capacity of States to fulfil their responsibilities in respect of persons of concern to the Office of the High Commissioner;

16. *Notes* the relevance of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement,[25] reaffirms its support for the role of the Office of the High Commissioner in providing humanitarian assistance and protection to internally displaced persons, on the basis of specific requests from the Secretary-General or the competent organs of the United Nations and with the consent of the State concerned, taking into account the complementarities of the mandates and expertise of other relevant organizations, and emphasizes that activities on behalf of internally displaced persons must not undermine the institution of asylum;

17. *Calls upon* States to adopt an approach that is sensitive to gender-related concerns and to ensure that women whose claims to refugee status are based upon a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons enumerated in the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees, including persecution through sexual violence

[25] E/CN.4/1998/53/Add.2.

or other gender-related persecution, are recognized as refugees, and encourages the Office of the High Commissioner to continue and to strengthen its efforts for the protection of refugee women;

18. *Urges* States and relevant parties to respect and observe principles of international human rights, humanitarian and refugee law that are of particular relevance to safeguarding the rights of child and adolescent refugees, notes the particular vulnerability of refugee children to being forcibly exposed to the risks of injury, exploitation and death, particularly in the context of armed conflict, and to abduction with a view to forcing participation in military activities, and urges all States and concerned parties to take all possible measures to protect child and adolescent refugees, including, in particular, from all forms of violence, exploitation and abuse, and to prevent their separation from their families;

19. *Notes* that 1999 has been declared the International Year of Older Persons, and calls upon the Office of the High Commissioner to make renewed efforts to ensure that the rights, needs and dignity of elderly refugees are fully respected and addressed through appropriate programme activities;

20. *Recalls* paragraphs 14, 15 and 16 of its resolution 50/152 of 21 December 1995, and encourages the High Commissioner to continue her activities on behalf of stateless persons;

21. *Calls upon* all Governments and other donors to demonstrate their international solidarity and burden-sharing with countries of asylum through efforts aimed at continuing to alleviate the burden borne by States, in particular developing countries, countries in transition and countries with limited resources that, owing to their location, host large numbers of refugees and asylum-seekers, to contribute to the programmes of the Office of the High Commissioner and, taking into account the effects on countries of asylum of the increasing requirements of large refugee populations and the need to widen the donor base and to achieve greater burden-sharing among donors, to assist the High Commissioner in securing additional and timely income from traditional governmental sources, other Governments and the private sector in order to ensure that the needs of refugees, returnees and displaced persons of concern to the Office of the High Commissioner are fully met.

Draft resolution VI

Assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 52/101 of 12 December 1997,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General[26] and that of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees,[27]

Recognizing the need to improve the security of refugees and to maintain the civilian and humanitarian nature of refugee camps and settlements in accordance with international laws, in particular refugee instruments, as well as human rights instruments and humanitarian laws,

[26] A/53/328.

[27] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 12* (A/53/12).

Noting with appreciation the continued efforts being expended by countries of asylum in accommodating refugees,

Convinced of the necessity of strengthening the capacity within the United Nations system for the implementation of relief and assistance programmes for refugees, returnees and displaced persons,

Welcoming the ongoing process of voluntary repatriation of refugees in some parts of Africa,

Welcoming also decision CM/Dec.412 (LXVIII) on the situation of refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa, adopted by the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity at its sixty-eighth ordinary session, held at Ouagadougou from 4 to 7 June 1998,[28]

Welcoming further the outcome of the ministerial meeting of the Security Council on the situation in Africa, held on 24 September 1998,[29] and the attention that was given at the meeting to the issue of refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa,

Taking note of the memoranda of understanding signed between the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Southern African Development Community in July 1996 on refugees, displaced persons and undocumented migration in southern Africa and between the Office and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development in June 1997 on issues concerning refugees and returnees,

Recalling the provisions of its resolution 2312 (XXII) of 14 December 1967, by which it adopted the Declaration on Territorial Asylum,

Recalling also the Organization of African Unity Convention governing the specific aspects of refugee problems in Africa of 1969[30] and the African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights,[31]

Recognizing the need for States to create conditions conducive both to the prevention of flows of refugees and displaced persons, primarily by addressing the underlying root causes, and to solutions, including voluntary repatriation,

Recognizing also the positive outcome of the conflict resolution efforts carried out in the subregion by the Economic Community of West African States, in creating a conducive environment for the voluntary repatriation of refugees and displaced persons,

Emphasizing the urgent need for Governments, especially those of the countries of origin, to address the underlying root causes of the conflicts that precipitate outflows and displacements of refugees,

Bearing in mind that the majority of refugees and displaced persons are women and children,

Noting with great concern that, despite all the efforts deployed so far by the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity and others, the situation of refugees and displaced persons in Africa, especially in the West African and Great Lakes regions and in the Horn of Africa, remains precarious,

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[28] See A/53/179, annex I.

[29] See S/PV.3931.

[30] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1001, No. 14691.

[31] Ibid., vol. 1520, No. 26363.

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General[26] and that of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees;[27]

2. *Notes with concern* that the declining socio-economic situation, compounded by political instability, internal strife, human rights violations and natural disasters, has led to increased numbers of refugees and displaced persons in some countries of Africa;

3. *Calls upon* all States and international organizations, within their mandates, to ensure that the civilian and humanitarian nature of refugee camps is not compromised by the presence or activities of armed elements;

4. *Expresses deep concern* at the serious and far-reaching consequences of large numbers of refugees and displaced persons in the receiving countries and the implications for security, long-term socio-economic development and the environment;

5. *Expresses concern* at instances where the fundamental principle of asylum is jeopardized by unlawful expulsion or refoulement or by threats to the life, physical security, integrity, dignity and well-being of refugees;

6. *Expresses its appreciation and strong support* for those African Governments and local populations that, in spite of the general deterioration of socio-economic and environmental conditions and over-stretched national resources, continue to accept the additional burden imposed upon them by increasing numbers of refugees and displaced persons, in compliance with the relevant principles of asylum;

7. *Commends* the Governments concerned for their sacrifices in providing assistance and protection to refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons and for their efforts to promote voluntary repatriation in safety and with dignity and other durable solutions;

8. *Expresses its gratitude* to the international community, and to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in particular, for the humanitarian assistance it has continued to render to refugees and displaced persons and to the countries of asylum;

9. *Welcomes* the strengthening of cooperation between the Office of the High Commissioner and the Organization of African Unity at all levels, and urges the two organizations, in conjunction with United Nations agencies, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, the international community and the Governments concerned, to increase efforts aimed at facilitating voluntary repatriation in safety and with dignity and at addressing the root causes of the refugee problem and working out modalities for a lasting solution;

10. *Reiterates* that the Plan of Action adopted by the Regional Conference on Assistance to Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons in the Great Lakes Region, held at Bujumbura from 15 to 17 February 1995, as endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 50/149, continues to be a viable framework for the resolution of the refugee and humanitarian problems in that region;

11. *Calls upon* the Office of the High Commissioner and other concerned entities to intensify protection activities by, *inter alia*, supporting the efforts of African Governments through appropriate capacity-building activities, including training of relevant officers, disseminating information about refugee instruments and principles and providing financial, technical and advisory services to accelerate the enactment or amendment and implementation of legislation relating to refugees;

12. *Appeals* to Governments, the United Nations, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and the international community to create conditions to facilitate the voluntary return in safety and with dignity and the early rehabilitation and reintegration of refugees;

13. *Also appeals* to the international community to respond positively, in the spirit of solidarity and burden-sharing, to the third-country resettlement requests of African refugees;

14. *Commends* the Governments of the Great Lakes and West African regions and of the Horn of Africa and the Office of the High Commissioner for their initiatives to promote voluntary repatriation in safety and with dignity within the framework of tripartite agreements;

15. *Calls upon* the Office of the High Commissioner, the Organization of African Unity, subregional organizations and all African States to continue to work closely in identifying solutions to all outstanding refugee problems;

16. *Encourages* the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to continue to cooperate with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, within their respective mandates, in the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms in emergency humanitarian situations in Africa;

17. *Welcomes* the ongoing efforts undertaken by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees with host Governments, the United Nations, non-governmental organizations and the international community in concentrating on the environment and ecosystems of countries of asylum;

18. *Notes with satisfaction* the voluntary return of millions of refugees to their homelands following the successful repatriation and reintegration operations carried out by the Office of the High Commissioner, with the cooperation and collaboration of countries hosting refugees and countries of origin, and looks forward to other programmes to assist the voluntary repatriation of all refugees in Africa;

19. *Expresses its concern* about the long stay of refugees in certain African countries, and calls upon the Office of the High Commissioner to keep its programmes under review, in conformity with its mandate in the host countries, taking into account the increasing requirements there;

20. *Urges* the international community to continue to fund the general refugee programmes of the Office of the High Commissioner, taking into account the substantially increased needs of programmes in Africa;

21. *Calls upon* Governments, United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and the international community as a whole to strengthen the emergency response capacity of the United Nations system and in the context of burden-sharing to continue to provide needed resources and operational support to refugees and countries of asylum in Africa until a durable solution can be found;

22. *Calls upon* the international donor community to provide material and financial assistance for the implementation of programmes intended for the rehabilitation of the environment and infrastructure affected by refugees in countries of asylum;

23. *Requests* all Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to pay particular attention to meeting the special needs of refugee women and children and displaced persons, including those with special protection needs;

24. *Calls upon* the Office of the High Commissioner to make renewed efforts to ensure that the rights, needs and dignity of elderly refugees are fully respected and addressed through appropriate programme activities;

25. *Calls upon* the Secretary-General, the Office of the High Commissioner and intergovernmental, regional and non-governmental organizations, in conjunction with States, to increase the capacity for coordination and delivery of humanitarian emergency assistance and disaster relief in respect of asylum, repatriation, rehabilitation and resettlement of refugees, returnees and displaced persons, including refugees in urban areas;

26. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit a comprehensive report on the situation of refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session, taking fully into account the efforts expended by countries of asylum, under the item entitled "Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, questions relating to refugees, returnees and displaced persons and humanitarian questions", and to present an oral report to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1999.